

RANKING MEMBER DAVIS HOSTS FORUM ON IMPACT OF DRUG PREVENTION, TREATMENT AND ADJUDICATION PROGRAMS

WASHINGTON, DC (October 19, 2011) - REP. DAVIS, WHITE HOUSE DRUG POLICY DIRECTOR AND COMMUNITY LEADERS DISCUSS DRUG POLICY

Congressman Danny K. Davis (D-IL), Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Healthcare, DC, Census and National Archives of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, hosted a forum on October 17 in Chicago, IL to highlight the impact of federal and localized drug prevention and treatment initiatives to combat recidivism and substance misuse. Gil Kerlikowske, the Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), local elected officials, and community leaders participated in the forum and discussed drug policy and its impact on African American communities. The Subcommittee has a jurisdiction over ONDCP.

"We have to break the cycle of drug use and criminal behavior in our communities," said Ranking Member Davis. "Programs initiated by ONDCP help support local programs that curb drug abuse while saving thousands for taxpayers. Policy and budget solutions that focus only on limiting services do our community a great injustice and ignore the realities and possible opportunities for drug abusers to turn around their lives to become contributing members of communities."

At the forum, Director Kerlikowske discussed the nation's drug policies and ways that innovative intervention and alternatives to incarceration programs, such as drug courts, are helping drug-involved offenders across the country stay out of prison and recover from addiction, while reducing criminal justice costs. ONDCP held a roundtable with local officials following the forum to discuss the agency's National Drug Control Strategy, which leverages federal resources to bring more treatment to the incarcerated population, expand re-entry services, and implement drug-free community support programs that help build drug prevention coalitions of community leaders and equip them with tools, training, and resources to have a sustained impact.

"Science tells us addiction is a disease that can be prevented and treated," said Director Kerlikowske. "That is why drug and veteran courts are a critical component of the Obama Administration's approach to our nation's drug problem. Drug courts divert non-violent drug offenders into treatment programs instead of prison, ultimately breaking the vicious cycle of addiction, crime, and incarceration."

The National Institute of Justice found that drug courts reduce crime among program participants and save taxpayer money. A recent Department of Justice study showed drug court participants reported 25 percent less criminal activity and had 16 percent fewer arrests than comparable offenders not enrolled in drug courts. Drug courts on average return \$7 to the community for every \$1 invested, and up to \$27 for every \$1 invested when factoring in savings from reduced foster care placements, health care services and other cost offsets.

The forum featured two panels with federal officials and community leaders. The first panel discussed Federal initiatives, including civilian and veteran drug prevention programs and drug courts, and the second panel highlighted the success of local drug treatment and adjudication programs and their impact on the health and safety of local communities.

The following individuals also participated in the forum: The Honorable Mattie Hunter, Illinois Senator, 3rd District; The Honorable Paul Biebel, Jr., Judge, Circuit Court of Cook County; Renee Oshinski, Deputy Director, Veteran Integrated Service Network 12; Michael Finley, Michael Finley Foundation, NBA Champion 2007 San Antonio Spurs; Mark

Kammerer, Cook County State's Attorney's office; Neli Vazquez-Rowland, President, A Safe Haven Foundation; Sara Moscato Howe, MS, CHES, Chief Executive Officer, Illinois Alcoholism & Drug Dependence Association; and Joel K. Johnson, President and Chief Executive Officer, Human Resources Development Institute, Inc.

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